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ABSTRACT

Research has found that effective schools can be distinguished from less successful counterparts by five characteristics. These are: strong instructional leadership; high expectations for all students to learn; an orderly and positive learning environment; a carefully developed instructional focus; and regular measurement of student learning. Based on these findings, the administrators and teachers of the Little Axe School District, Oklahoma, embarked on an extensive school-improvement program. In 1988-89, they established committees to address the five correlates of effective schools; attended staff development sessions to study the correlates; and developed objectives. During the following 2 school years, staff continued their training; developed an after-school alternative program for suspended students; and implemented a curriculum mapping project. District administrators asked researchers from the University of Oklahoma to examine the impact of the building principal on the effective schools process underway at each of the schools. "Shadowers" followed each principal and the superintendent for an entire day and were privy to all of the day's happenings, making notes of all dialogue with faculty and students (numerous direct quotations are included in the paper). The workload of administrators seemed to be overwhelming. Administrators cited lack of time and maintaining good communication with staff and parents as their chief concerns. Evaluation of the school-improvement program also included interviews with selected staff and students and the administration of the Leadership Practices Inventory to administrators and selected staff. (SV)

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
A CASE STUDY

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL RURAL DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

School reform in the 1980's was an important agenda item for teachers, administrators, boards of education, and American citizenry as a whole. In the past, reform in American education has been predicated on the assumption that the problem lies with teachers and their ability or inability to teach. However, the research on effective schools has challenged that conventional attitude and has identified a number of characteristics which distinguish the most successful schools from their least effective counterparts. The differences, in most cases, have been revealed to be in the attitudes and actions of the administrators and teachers, not in the district's wealth or family background. Results of the Coleman Report (1966) which stated that family background was the predominant determiner of student achievement is credited with providing the impetus for the Effective Schools Research. Researchers such as Edmonds, 1979; Brookover, et.al, 1979; and Rutter, et.al, 1979; disagreed with the findings of the Coleman Report and examined other factors which affect student achievement.

The Effective Schools Movement was founded on three main assumptions: 1) some schools are unusually effective in teaching poor and minority children basic skills as measured by standardized tests; 2) successful schools exhibit characteristics that are correlated with their success and are within the domain of education to manipulate; and 3) the characteristics of successful schools provide a basis for improving other schools (Bickel, 1983).

Effective schools researchers *believe* there is a body of knowledge developed from research that gives educators direction in developing more effective schools for all students (Edmonds, 1979; Juitt & Segars, 1980). Edmonds' (1979) criterion for an effective school was that poor and minority children scored well on standardized achievement tests in proportions equal to those attained by children from the dominant culture. In reviewing the literature on effective schooling, Grady, Wayson, and Zirkel (1989) reiterated Edmonds 1979 findings regarding effective schools. In their research, they found that effective schools were characterized by:

1) Strong instructional leadership;
2) High expectation of achievement for all students to learn;
3) An orderly and positive climate that supports learning;
4) A carefully developed instructional focus and
5) Regular measurement of student learning.

These characteristics have become known as the Correlates of the Effective Schools Movement (Edmonds, 1979). Since the initial research surfaced, many educators have come to believe that the Effective Schools Research can make an impact on school reform and student achievement (Squires, et.al, 1984) While the Little Axe School District administrators and teachers were searching for a more effective teacher evaluation instrument, they encountered the research regarding the Effective School Movement. Realizing that the concerns they had regarding the Little Axe School went beyond teacher evaluations, school personnel began taking a closer look at the Effective Schools findings. Consequently, armed with research from the Effective Schools literature, the administrators and teachers of the Little Axe School District embarked on an extensive school improvement program.

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE DISTRICT

In the late 1880's President Benjamin Harrison signed a Presidential Proclamation that established the boundaries for the land located within the Oklahoma Territory. In 1890 the Federal government decreed that rural schools would be established every three miles. The location of these schools would be determined by a starting point at the northeast corner of the county and counting down three miles and over three miles. At each one of these three mile points, a school was to be established. The Little Axe School District Number 70 was the last independent school district to be established in Cleveland County. The 1897 school census listed in the State Archives lists 67 districts in Cleveland County and the 1899 census lists 69 districts. The Little Axe School District was not listed on the State Report until the 1912 census because the state did not list schools with fewer than two teachers. However, there was a school established in the Little Axe area at least 19 years earlier.

Once the school employed two teachers, records documented the student and teacher population of the district. The 1926 State of Oklahoma Scholastic Enumeration Report listed the school population of Little Axe grades 1-6 at 122 students and two teachers. The 1936-37 Report of the State Superintendent listed two teachers and 103 students; the 1949-50 Oklahoma Educational Directory listed the student population as 81 with two teachers at Little Axe school. After the end of World War II, a new school building was constructed on the original site to replace a frame structure that had served as the school for many years. This new building originally consisted of a kitchen and classrooms with an auditorium and cafeteria added later. During the decade of the 1950's, plans were formulated to construct a dam on Little River east of Norman. The construction of this dam was a joint venture of the City of Norman and the Army Corps of Engineers. The primary purpose of this dam was to provide a water source for the

city of Norman. The construction of the dam began in the early 1960's and was completed in 1968. The waters of the newly named Thunderbird Dam inundated a large portion of the Little Axe School land which was located at the extreme eastern end of the dam. The dam construction, along with an expected growth of the Little Axe area, made it necessary to find a new location for the school. Little Axe School was relocated on land approximately one mile east of the original site at 168th Street on Highway 9.

The relocated school site was opened in 1966 after a classroom building and cafeteria were constructed with a gymnasium added later. The student population grew to approximately 275 students K-9. During the next 10 years, the student population continued to grow. In 1985, the Little Axe School District voted to construct a new classroom building containing a library and science laboratory. The following year, 1986, the school board proposed the formation of a high school. Subsequently, its first high school graduation was held in 1988.

THE LITTLE AXE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

In 1987 the Little Axe School District embarked on an ambitious Effective Schools Program that would eventually include all of the resources of the District. The Little Axe Public School System's involvement in the Effective School program can be traced to the formation of a Superintendent's Advisory Committee in the fall of 1987. The committee membership, including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and elected teacher representatives, was formed to improve communication throughout the school system.

The teacher representatives brought to the attention of the Committee the problems and concerns of the teachers in their respective buildings. The subject of teacher evaluation became an ongoing topic of the Advisory Committee meetings, and it was decided that a more effective evaluation instrument was needed. A

separate committee was formed and was given the task of identifying specific teaching behaviors and designing an evaluation instrument that would identify these behaviors. This committee represented the original organizational framework that evolved into the Effective Schools Committee.

Prior to the official formation of an Effective Schools Committee in 1987, teachers and administrators had been using some of the Effective Schools practices and techniques. No formal program or direction had been adopted on a district-wide basis, however. Some administrators and faculty members had been exposed to the research through graduate courses or workshops they had taken or through professional journal articles. Although some of the faculty were using Effective Schools strategies in their classrooms, their attempts were haphazard and nondirected by the administration.

The Little Axe School District personnel used the fall and winter months of the 1987 school year as a time to assess their needs regarding an adoption of an overall Effective Schools Program and to plan for this adoption. In the spring of 1988, the Little Axe Public Schools sponsored a "Leadership in Excellence" conference on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. This conference, funded by a Chapter II grant from the State Department of Education, was attended by administrators from the surrounding area. The ten-day workshop, presented by the Northwest Regional Development Laboratory from Oregon, provided valuable information and resource material for the steering committee. At the conference, faculty and consultants indicated the three distinct levels--the classroom, each individual building, and the overall district--where effective school practices could be identified. From information and training provided at the conference, Little Axe personnel began to develop an overall plan for school

reform in their district. Long-term and short-range goals were discussed and the Effective Schools Program was put into motion.

The first official meeting of the Effective School Steering Committee was held on August 19, 1988. An Effective Schools chairperson was chosen and committees were designed according to the five correlates of the Effective Schools Research, namely, 1) Instructional Leadership; 2) Student Expectations; 3) School Climate; 4) Instructional Focus; and 5) Evaluation. Every teacher and administrator would eventually be solicited to serve on at least one of the committees.

At the second meeting, the steering committee discussed its specific goals. They decided they needed to receive formal training in a selected teaching model and needed to establish a resource center of Effective Schools Research materials in the school library. It was also determined that interaction among teachers on all grade levels would be very beneficial and that teachers must be publicly recognized for their positive contributions to the school. Additionally, it was announced that the committee would have a working budget of $1,000 provided by the little Axe School District to be used for supplies and materials.

Motivated by the conference of the previous spring and the official adoption of the program by the district, several teachers and administrators attended the Northeast Oklahoma Staff Development Leadership training conference at Fountainhead State Lodge in August, 1988. This conference addressed many diverse issues including teacher motivation, cooperative learning, classroom management, thinking skills, students at risk, and computer assisted instruction. These various strategies for effective teaching would later be used by the steering committee when they began their task of choosing an acceptable teaching model for the Little Axe School District.

The lack of a common schema or knowledge base of the Effective Schools Research was addressed by the steering committee at its inaugural meeting in August of 1988 as one of the problems in initiating the program. Additionally, the educational background of the teachers and administrators at Little Axe was very diverse, with degrees earned in private and public colleges and universities in Oklahoma being represented on the faculty. Also, a high percentage of faculty members had attended schools in other states. Because of the varied experiences and training of the staff, it was determined that the entire school community must become involved in Effective Schools process. This included administrators, teachers, and support personnel. To begin this training, a core of teachers on the steering committee were trained by a representative of the Kelwyn Corporation in the Effective Schools approach in November of 1988. Following the Kelwyn training, the steering committee developed a strategic plan for the ongoing implementation of the Effective Schools Program. Short-term goals established by the steering committee, at this time, included the use of a faculty survey to provide baseline data for the program, a plan for staff training, and the development of an evaluation instrument to monitor the progress of the program.

Correlate Committee assignments were designated by the steering committee members. Two steering committee members served on each Correlate Committee along with volunteers from the remaining teaching and administrative staff. An effort was made to assign one member from the elementary and one from secondary to each committee. The final Correlate Committee names chosen were: 1) Teacher Behavior and High Expectation, 2) The Principal as an Instructional Leader, 3) Instructional Focus, 4) Measurement, and 5) School Climate. The co-chairpersons of each committee were ultimately responsible for presenting the Effective

Schools concept of their designated committee to the faculty at an inservice workshop held March 3, 1989.

Prior to the March Inservice Training, the steering committee met with the Little Axe Board of Education in January to formally present the Effective Schools Concept to the Board members. The following statement was made by the board president after meeting with the committee:

> We, the Board of Education believe that all children can learn and that the Effective School practice and the implementation of Effective School strategy will create an environment in which 90% of the students can achieve at or above the 50th percentile in all of the basic skills. Therefore, it is the intent of the Little Axe Board of Education to provide support and request the school administration to take the lead in promoting the Effective School concept (January, 1989. Little Axe Board of Education President).

At the inservice training in March, a session regarding an overview of the Effective Schools Model was presented to all of the faculty members. Each teacher was assigned to attend small group workshops on each of the five correlates. The Kelwyn video tapes were utilized in both the large and small group sessions, with each of the separate correlate chairpersons making presentations.

Following the inservice, teachers were asked to evaluate the session and identify five areas of concern and to contribute five positive remarks regarding Little Axe School District. The teachers stated that discipline was inconsistent and that standardized test scores were not a true reflection of the quality of the teaching at Little Axe. Another area of concern was that principals did not have enough time to be true instructional leaders and that the central office administrators were not totally committed to the program. The teachers also stated that it was difficult to focus all their efforts on the curriculum, instructional techniques, and the achievement test. Although problems were

identified, most of the staff were enthusiastic, cooperative, and positive and were willing to work toward becoming an Effective School.

The Correlate Committee members spent the rest of the school year formulating the major goals for their committees to reach during the 1989-90 school year. Later in the year, the committees were eventually divided between the elementary and secondary school levels with each level developing its own strategy to be implemented to reach the designated goals. The 1989-90 resulting goals were:

Instructional Focus-The Establishment of a school-wide minimum mastery criteria for each grade level.

Climate-Implementation of a school-wide discipline policy.

Measurement-Raise the achievement test scores by an average of 3%.

Teacher Behavior/High Expectations-Motivation for teachers to convey positive expectations toward all children.

Principal as the Instructional Leader-Allow principals to spend at least 50% of their time on instructional leadership.

In August, 1989, the Effective Schools Model was reviewed during the teacher inservice workshops which were held prior to the beginning of the school year. Teachers new to the district received an intense and indepth training session which would familiarize them with the Effective Schools Model. In an effort to provide continuous staff training, workshops were presented throughout the year on topics such as cooperative learning and questioning techniques. In December, the Little Axe Effective Schools Committee applied for the Staff Development Recognition Award sponsored by the Southwest Regional Development Laboratory in Austin Texas. In February, 1990, the Little Axe program was named the winner of this award.

During the 1989-90 school year, the members of the Correlate Committee were asked to make presentations reviewing the implementation of the Little Axe

Effective School program at many workshops and meetings throughout Oklahoma. A video tape of the school's program, produced by the University of Oklahoma, was shown at these meetings. The highlight of the school year was a national conference on Effective Schools held on May 5-6, 1990 at the University of Oklahoma. Public school officials from across the state, representatives from the State Department of Education, as well as the United States Department of Education were in attendance at this conference. Members of the Little Axe Steering Committee conducted workshops on their various Correlate Committee activities. These workshops were attended by a variety of school personnel including teachers, superintendents, principals, and school board members. These workshops provided a tremendous opportunity for the Little Axe school system to publicize the Effective School Program and their improvement process.

In January, it was announced that the State Department of Education had approved a $20,000 grant from the Chapter II program for Little Axe Schools. The money would be used to provide training for teachers in the Madeline Hunter teaching model. In June, 1990, 13 members of the Little Axe staff attended a workshop conducted by Hunter in Nashville, Tennessee. Hunter's instructional model provided the staff with renewed dedication and enthusiasm for the program.

At the end of the 1989-90 school term, teachers were surveyed using the same evaluation instrument used previously to provide baseline data. The results of the survey indicated that the teachers did not really believe they were more of an influence on a student's performance than the home environment. There was, however, positive growth in all areas of the survey data. As a result of this information, two major goals were established for the Little Axe secondary school: 1) The Little Axe secondary school would promote the belief that the school can be a major influence on the students and 2) The Little Axe secondary

school would provide equitable learning and equal access for all students. The elementary school also identified two goals:

1) To establish methods to communicate to parents how they can become more actively involved in their child's learning and

2) To design criterion referenced tests which measure individual student progress and have a high correlation with the scope and sequence of the school curriculum.

To provide additional training, the Superintendent of Little Axe contacted the Arkansas Department of Education concerning the Program for Effective Teaching (P.E.T.). The program is similar to the Madeline Hunter model and is required for all teachers in Arkansas. Arrangements were made to conduct the P.E.T. training at Little Axe in August, 1990. The seven-day workshop was attended by all principals and selected teachers from each grade level. The teachers who completed the training became peer coaches to the teachers who did not attend the training for the 1990-1991 school term. Selected Little Axe personnel would attend two more P.E.T. training sessions, thereby qualifying them as certified trainers. These trainers would be available to go to other Oklahoma school districts to present the Program for Effective Teaching.

During the 1990-91 school year, Correlate Committee meetings were held twice per month. Committee reports regarding the progress of each committee were give once a month at monthly faculty meetings. During this time, it had been decided to divide the steering committee between the elementary and secondary levels in order to sharpen the focus of the Effective Schools Program per grade level. An Executive Committee made up of representatives from both groups was charged with overseeing the operation of the entire program for the school year.

THE IMPACT OF THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

The Little Axe Effective Schools Program has operated for the past two years under the guidance and leadership of the Correlate Committees and the district's administration. Although the personnel at Little Axe recognize that one correlate of an Effective Schools Program is not more important than any of the other correlates, the administration wanted to obtain additional information regarding the Instructional Leadership Correlate. In order to determine the impact the building principal has on the Effective Schools Process, staff from the University of Oklahoma, utilizing a case-study approach, conducted additional research specifically analyzing the Principal as Instructional Leader Correlate.

Educational literature of the past few years has devoted considerable attention to the key role the building principal plays in the development of an effective school (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980; Cotton & Savard, 1980; and Huff & Schallman, 1982). These studies reported that a strong building leader can help create the type of environment and school culture needed to improve the quality of a district's instructional program.

The research on Effective Schools points to a school's organization and leadership as major contributors to positive school outcomes. Studies suggest that the leadership of the school, particularly the principal, plays a critical role in student achievement (Hager & Scarr, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1985; and Wynne, 1981) Such leaders organize the school so that teachers maximize student involvement and success. Squires, Huitt, and Segard (1984) proposed that Effective Schools have leaders who reinforce an academic emphasis, an orderly environment, and expectations for success from students and staff. The research continued to show that the principal plays an important and vital role in producing high student achievement. Edmonds (1982) stated that the principal's

leadership and attention to the quality of instruction was a major characteristic of effective schools. Brookover and Lezotte (1979) maintained that effective principals are more assertive in their leadership role and assume responsibility for the school's success.

PRINCIPAL SHADOWING PROJECT

Recognizing that the role each principal played in the Effective School Program was important, University staff embarked on a shadowing project of the administrators involved in the program to observe their leadership styles and how these styles interact with the goals of the program.

Each principal and the superintendent were shadowed for an entire day. Because the Effective Schools research specifically addressed the role of the principal as an instructional leader, only the principal data will be discussed at this time. Ground rules were initially established which allowed the shadower to be privy to all the events which happened throughout the day. Each person involved with an administrator during the day was given an explanation regarding the purpose of the shadowing and could opt to have the shadower not participate in his or her conference with the administrator. On only three occasions, was the shadower asked not to participate.

Notes were taken of the dialogue between the administrators and school personnel and students throughout each observation. The work load of the administrators appeared to be overwhelming. Most of the administrators appeared to be overworked. They admitted they took work home in order to give themselves time the following day to be available to faculty and students as concerns surfaced.

All of the administrators arrived prior to 8:00 am with one principal consistently coming to work before 7:00 am. Each administrator was able to

articulate the goals of his or her building and able to give an overview of the Effective Schools Project and what the district wanted to accomplish as a whole.

The shadower was particularly impressed with the apparent rapport between the intermediate and junior high school principals and their respective students. On numerous occasions, these principals greeted students in the hallways and cafeteria on a casual basis. (e.g. "How are you doing?" "That was a good game last night." "You did a great job.") While shadowing these two administrators, opportunities were also available to observe students being recognized, both individually and as groups. On one occasion, approximately thirty students participated in a short awards assembly honoring the students of the month. Prior to the assembly, the students congregated in the hall while the principal explained what they were going to do. He practiced with each student on how to accept the award and shake hands at the same time. He also told the students, "Be sure to look at the audience in case your parents want to take your picture." These awards were based on "Most Improved Student" and "Highest Achieving Student" in each classroom. Parents were invited to this assembly and the principal gave a short talk explaining the Effective Schools project and why these students were being honored.Each student was then introduced and given a certificate. The assembly only lasted about twenty minutes but a concerted effort was made to make it a "big" event. Tables were decorated and refreshments were served. The public relations director then took each student's picture. These pictures were to be included in the school's newsletter with a duplicate picture sent to each parent.

In at least three instances during the day of shadowing, students were individually recognized by their respective principal for good behavior. These students were asked to report to the principal's office where he personally

congratulated them on their behavior, and/or grades. These students had been referred by teachers on a student referral form. Traditionally, these forms are used for students who have misbehaved. As in most schools, disciplining students is a major portion of the principal's duties. The shadower was allowed to observe three of the principals perform in this role. On each observed occasion, students were treated with dignity as the issue, not the student, was addressed. Each student was asked if s/he knew why s/he was in the principal's office. They were then each given the opportunity to explain their behavior. They were also asked if they knew the consequences of their behavior. The intermediate and junior high principals were particularly adept at addressing student discipline problems. They asked the students who were involved in disciplinary situations questions such as: "Could you have walked away?" (when a student was "bugging" another student which led to a kicking incident) and "What should you have done?" and "What will you do next time?" and "What are the rules regarding (a particular incident)?" In each case, students were being held accountable for their own actions. In order to show examples of these situations and the leadership involved, the shadower provides the following scenarios:

When talking with one particular student regarding her behavior in class and the fact that she had been "skipping school", the principal explained that her behavior was getting out of control and that sometimes ramifications of her behavior went beyond what either he or the school could do. He elucidated that when that happens, the law "kicks in" and there isn't anything he can do to help after that. She asked questions then regarding her academic status and if the school was going to "flunk me". The principal responded that at her grade, "the school won't retain you, you'll retain yourself." He then went on to explain her

responsibilities as a student and they continued to discuss further consequences should her misbehavior continue.

In another instance, a student was referred to a different principal for fighting earlier in the day.

(P = Principal; S = Student)

The student had been called to the office regarding a pushing incident which occurred in the cafeteria. The student entered:

P: Okay, _____, would you tell me please what happened in the cafeteria today?

S: _____ was pushing and kicking me between the legs. He's been bugging me for weeks and bugging other people, too.

P: Could you have walked away?

S: Yes.

P: What should you have done?

S: Gone my separate way.

P: When someone hits and we hit back that makes it a fight. We can't have a fight unless you hit back. Do you understand what you should have done?

S: Yes.

P: Tell me what you should have done.

S: I should have just walked away.

P: Have you ever been in In-school Suspension? (ISS)

S: Yes and nods affirmatively.

P: Tell me the rules for ISS?

S: You have to stay in the ISS room and do all you work. You can't talk or visit with your friends. You stay in ISS for as many days as you say.

P: What happens if you mess up in ISS?

S: You get another day or kicked out of school.

P: Okay, I'm going to talk to _____ later and give him some time to cool off. You need to avoid him today. I'll put you in ISS tomorrow so you

can attend the assembly." (Note: This is one of the students being honored later in the morning and the principal wanted the student to be able to attend.) "Do you understand the rules for ISS?" (Student nods affirmatively.) "You know I have to call your parents about this?" (Student cast eyes downward and nods affirmatively.) "Okay, you may go now." Student Leaves.

The shadower had an opportunity to observe each administrator in situations dealing with staff members. Each time, the principal exhibited sensitivity and concern when dealing with certified and/or classified staff. When staff members stopped into the office for a brief visit, a cup of coffee, or to use the xerox machine, respective principals greeted them cordially and inquired as to their health, some aspect of their work, or their family in general. When disciplinary or professional conferences were necessary, the principals conducted themselves in a professional manner, addressing the issue at hand and not the person him/herself.

Throughout the shadowing experience of the five administrators, the shadower ascertained that in each case, there was never a spare minute of time when any administrator was not on-task. The administrators were constantly dealing with some type of situation---some major in scope; some almost comical in triviality. Principals were called upon to literally put out fires (from burning toilet paper and paper towels in the bathroom), to cleaning up after sick students, to monitoring the cafeteria and hallways, to dealing with parents and various community members (who were at times irate). Every administrator lamented that there simply was not enough time in the day to truly be an instructional leader. The Little Axe School District administration has recognized this as a legitimate concern and through the Effective School Programs has initiated the means for administrators to spend a minimum of 50% of their time being instructional leaders.

Lack of communication was another concern of the administrators. This included communication between themselves and the central office; themselves and faculty; themselves and parents. Two of the principals were specifically concerned about this and had established goals for themselves to improve their communication skills. One of these principals had started contacting at least one parent daily with good news about his/her child. The other administrator was making a conscious effort of talking directly with his staff members more instead of communicating with them through memoranda and/or intercom announcements.

The shadower noticed that each principal worked on being visible to students and staff alike. The secondary level principals made a concerted effort to be in the hallways when class changes were occurring and to interact in a casual manner with the students. Three of the principals were particularly adept at the technique of Management by Walking Around (Peters and Waterman) and appeared to block out specific times during the day to conduct informal classroom visits and building monitoring. One principal even commented that "If I walk in a classroom and the teacher asks, What do you need, I know I haven't been in there enough."

The shadower was aware of the sensitive manner in which all of the principals dealt with parental concerns. Each principal was a good listener and took parental concerns seriously. In every case, these concerns were dealt with in a timely manner either through a conference, telephone call, or message sent home with the child. The shadower also observed the manner in which the principals were able to use humor as a method to diffuse potential problems. Three of the principals specifically were able to openly joke with staff members and their secretaries regarding events throughout the day. Although each took their jobs very seriously, humor was an integral part of each of their days.

Each principal was able to articulate the goals of their respective buildings and viewed their own role as an important one in the quest of an effective school. At all times, decisions were made based on the total welfare of all of their students. These principals believe all of the students can achieve the minimum mastery of academic skills and are striving to provide the type of environment which will allow teachers to teach and students to learn. These principals were skillful at "talking the talk" and "walking the walk" of an Effective School.

STUDENT, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS

After the Little Axe Effective Schools Program had been operating for a year, additional evaluation of the status of the program was warranted. It was decided by University personnel and Little Axe staff to conduct personal interviews with selected personnel and students regarding the program. Taped interviews were conducted with four senior high students, eight junior and senior high staff members, five elementary staff members, the junior/senior high principal, the upper elementary principal, the lower elementary principal, and the junior/senior high assistant principal. Specific questions were designed for each group and the interviews were conducted by University personnel. Interviews of the faculty and administration lasted between 30 and 60 minutes; student interviews were considerably shorter. Questions centered around the individual's knowledge base of the Effective Schools Program, his/her training, professional and personal gains, staff perceptions of the leadership, and strengths and areas of improvement of the overall program.

Three of the four students were able to identify what the Little Axe Effective Schools Program was although their definitions differed. When asked "Can you explain to me what the Little Axe Effective Schools Program is and as

a student have you been aware of the program being initiated here?", one student commented:

"No, I haven't been aware of it. The only thing I would know...I think our teachers come across to students really well."

The other students' comments included:
"The teachers are really helpful..." "I really like the administration..." " They are trying to teach you what you need to learn for later on in life..." " ...we have outstanding faculty." "It's easier to learn this year..."

Faculty and administrator interviews were more in depth. When the faculty members were asked to explain what they felt the Little Axe Effective School Program was. Their answers included:

"...cooperative effort to make an atmosphere in our school where children can learn."

"...implement the five correlate groups...setting specific goals and trying to have higher expectations for the students..."

"...involves professional growth and the development of effective research-based instructional practices."

"...to increase learning...."

"...program for helping every student succeed...helping each student develop educationally or academically to his or her fullest potential."

"...improve the overall impact Little Axe School has on students."

"...help the teachers...get an idea what we should be doing. As far as what I learned in college--it didn't help me be an effective teacher."

"...focus the teachers, students, and administrators on learning."

"...the students will benefit...that's the ultimate goal."

All of the teachers who were interviewed were informed of the program by either being on the initial committees or through staff development and inservice. They also were aware that new staff members were informed of the program through inservice training and participation on Correlate Committees. Seventy-three percent of the teachers interviewed had no previous knowledge or training regarding the Effective Schools Research. Only one instructor had

previously taught in a district using the Effective Schools Research. All of the instructors reported that their teaching performance had changed since the initiation of the program. Comments regarding this question included:

"...really helped me become more aware of how I teach and my shortcomings...to make me a better teacher."

"...more prepared for class...more effective in trying to get everybody involved..."

"...certainly have refined and become more sophisticated in my techniques..."

"...I understand more about questioning techniques...why lesson plans are necessary, why objectives are necessary."

"...I am more pleasant...I'm just more of a positive person."

Each staff member wholeheartedly recommended the Effective Schools Program to other districts. When asked if they felt they had received or are receiving adequate training regarding implementation of the program, seven of the eleven staff members replied affirmatively. The remaining teachers qualified their answers stating that so far what they had received was important but that they needed more in some areas. One teacher felt there was too much "surveying" with little follow-up.

Three fourths of the staff felt other administrators and staff members had a firm grasp on what the program entailed. The remaining faculty felt that "some of them did and some of them didn't."

Another area that intrigued the researchers was how the program affected the participants on a professional and personal basis. Faculty members made constructive comments regarding their growth in these areas. Professional improvement remarks included:

"It has helped me be more of an effective teacher."

"It has made me want to be a stronger teacher."

"We work together more on team levels in reaching our objectives."

"I have become more aware of trying not to make negative comments...I try to encourage people that may not always be on task..."

"It has helped me concentrate more on running my class."

"I think that the strong appeal of it basically is that is gives a cohesiveness to our goals...and that the goals are articulated."

"When I think of education now, I think more in terms of the district...widened my perspective out of the classroom to the building level."

"I can't count the ways! I learned more about discipline, questioning techniques...how to discuss in class...the kind of tests to give...things I should have been taught in college."

"It's changed my attitude toward teaching...It has made me more skilled..."

"I am more focused...I say to myself, Why am I doing this?...there is a real direction (in my teaching)...I really look at what I'm teaching and analyze it."

"Personally, I have made drastic leaps in growth in my abilities--my skills--in the classroom. I think before I kind of muddled through."

Comments regarding personal gain included:

"My goals have become somewhat more clear and especially in the lesson planning area..."

"...think it is more of a team here.."

"It has made my teaching easier."

"I think it gives you a set of steps to follow in teaching."

"...the insight that we do have an impact on the students...a more positive attitude...the environment is better."

"Self-confidence...big time! It really scared me how much I didn't know..."

"the whole atmosphere of the school has changed. I did the disaggregation of the test scores...I put in high score after high score. It raised my expectations totally."

"I think I've become a better teacher."

"Self confidence in my teaching...better relationship with my peers...and students...much better environment."

Additional information was collected from the interviewees regarding whether or not they had a clear vision as to where Little Axe School District was going as a result of the Effective Schools Program and what that vision entailed. Again, each teacher knew the district had a vision, however, what it entailed differed among the staff members. Some of their responses were:

"Our vision...where everybody, including parents, teachers, administrators, community members are all involved in the education of every child in the school."

"...improvement in our instructional leadership...going to take time...we are meeting our goals and the curriculum is one of the top priorities."

"...all children can learn."

"...school system is trying to upgrade its state recognition as far as the student's ability to learn and retain information...can see Little Axe being recognized in the state as one of the more productive school systems."

"...they would like to be in the top 10%..."

"...have every student achieve no matter what his or her background, or the educational background of his/her family."

"...our vision is kind of getting fuzzy at this point but our ultimate goal...is to increase the learning of all students..."

Faculty members were also asked what changes they would make in the administering of the program. Most of the teachers predicated their remarks with the fact that they thought things were progressing very smoothly and rapidly, however, the following suggestions were proffered:

"...need to put something in to include those kids with learning problems..."

"...more time for the pre-planning...need to work more on our criteria referenced test..."

"...more practical, less paperwork."

"...opportunities to discuss with teachers who are more experienced in Effective School approaches...we need chances to talk...more inservice...see models..."

"...more site-based (management)..."

"...need to be mandatory program...every one participate..."

"...clarify or delineate the areas of responsibility for communication...Effective School Committee is kind of weak in the area of communicating with the rest of the teachers..."

"...make the administrators be strong instructional leaders..."

"...some of the teacher feel left out..."staff development needs to be focused...faculty meetings devoted towards involving these people...so everyone has a clear vision..."

Administrators were interviewed and asked the same questions as their staff members. All of the administrators had a clear explanation of what they felt the Little Axe Effective Schools Program was. These explanations included:

"The Effective Schools Program is something everyone can identify with. It has given us a common language, a common plan whereby we develop goals...achieve things we couldn't before..."

"...very organized program...everybody knows what the goals are...working toward these goals to bring about a more effective school."

"...make things more equitable for all children and to help them achieve the highest they can achieve..."

"...a positive instructional focus program that made me, for the first time in ten years, feel like I am an instructional leader."

The administrators had been made aware of the program initially in varying degrees. Two administrators had courses at the University prior to the initial Kelwyn training provided by the district. Another administrator was exposed to the concept for the first time through his participation in the Kelwyn training. The final administrator was new to the district and had no previous Effective Schools exposure. Additionally, all of the administrators participated to some degree in the P.E.T. teacher training.

As with the faculty, the Effective Schools Program has affected the administrators in different ways, both professionally and personally. The administrators reported the program has affected them professionally by:

"...made me aware of the total school concept...made me more aware of all my teachers' needs and my students' needs. I have to be the facilitator to make this thing go...The teachers are the ones that make the school successful. I have to set it up for them so they can have that success."

"...made me more professional...more goal oriented...realize I cannot run the school by myself...use participatory management...problems have gotten solved more quickly when the teachers are involved in the process.

"...keeps me in touch with the way things should be and the way the future is to look if we keep working hard..."

"...without exaggeration I know more about curriculum and working and helping teachers."

Personal gains made because of the Effective Schools Program were described by the following:

"...I can be a more effective administrator because of it...more organized...I can give (problems that arise) to the correlate groups...we can focus on the problem...teachers have been able do some planning."

"...gained some leadership skills...feel better about myself...school runs more smoothly...ways to assess what we are doing and as we do that, we see that we have grown..."

"...all of us working together as a cohesive staff...not just me doing everything..."

"...for the first time...honestly go to an interview and say I'm a total principal now...truly stand up and say I am an instructional leader..."

The administrators had a clear vision as to where the Little Axe School District was going as a result of the Effective Schools Program and could articulate that vision:

"...my high expectations of my teachers and their high expectations of students...starting to pay off...result in our students having more opportunities."

"...I don't think we will ever reach where we want to reach...have to (continue) to set new goals...we have seen a lot of progress..."

"...a vision that the board has approved...overall improvement in all five areas..."

"...to be a model school...to insure that every student, regardless of background, gets a maximized education...ultimate goal is you are going to see

students coming out of Little Axe that are much more prepared, capable, effective, and cognitive."

All of the administrators felt their performance had changed since the initiation of the program. Comments regarding this change include:

"I believe it has...for the better...most important thing I have to do is to be an instructional leader..."

"Yes...more into participatory management...more goal oriented...more time to do the things that I need to do...certainly helped me in the leadership area."

"...really have been tuned to Madeline Hunter's books...have them memorized! When I go in the classrooms I can really be in tune to what is going on..."

"...much more professional...total administrator...I have the tools now that I didn't have in the past."

Suggestions or changes regarding the administration of the program were also discussed by the administrators. Although two of them felt no changes were necessary, the suggestions made by the other administrators included:

"...need more time to sit down and just kind of see what everybody is doing..."

"...need better coordination between buildings..."

Each of the administrators would recommend the Effective Schools Program to other districts. Qualifiers such as "only if they were committed to really becoming involved in it" were placed on their statements however.

The administrators were also asked what could be done to make the program more effective. Two of them felt they needed more community involvement and would work toward that the following school year; one felt everything was on "the proper time line" and one stated that more training held in the summer would be beneficial.

All of the administrators felt the teaching performance of their staff had changed since the initiation of the program. These observations included:

"...a lot of change...much more on task...their expectations of the students have been raised..."

"...more aware of teaching techniques...know what is expected of them..."

"...more aware of how they are teaching..."

"...teachers are really doing a good job..."

Although one administrator indicated her style of leadership hadn't changed, the remaining administrators felt their styles had changed since working with the program. These comments included:

"...more involved in the instructional process...rather than paying lip service..."

"...more participatory management...more direct with people...use different strategies..."

"...given me the opportunity and the confidence to be more open with the teachers, to accept what they say, and to listen to what their suggestions are.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY

As the Little Axe School District began incorporating the Effective Schools Program into their district, particular attention was paid to the leadership styles of the administrators. In order to obtain additional information regarding the administrator styles, the Leadership Practices Inventory questionnaire was given to each administrator and selected staff members. Although the inventory was given to the superintendent and the four administrators who were originally involved in the program at the beginning, for the purpose of this study, only the information regarding the three current building administrators who completed the inventory will be discussed.

The inventory was used to ascertain how each administrator perceived him/herself as a leader. Additionally, a corresponding questionnaire was disseminated to ten staff members of each administrator to determine how they perceived their superordinate's leadership styles.

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), consisted of thirty behavioral statements in which each administrator was asked to rate him/herself as to the frequency s/he practiced the stated behavior. For instance, a statement such as "I involve others in planning the action we take" would then be followed by five Likert type possibilities ranging from "rarely" to "very frequently". Each answer was tabulated and correlated to five leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner (1988). These practices were:

1) Challenging the Process,

2) Inspiring a Shared Vision,

3) Enabling Others to Act,

4) Modeling the Way, and

5) Encouraging the Heart.

Reliability of the Leadership Practices Inventory has been documented two different ways by the authors. First, the LPI has shown sound psychometric properties: each scale is internally reliable. That is, the items are highly correlated within each scale. Factor analyses indicate that the scores are generally orthogonal; they do not all measure the same phenomenon. Second, results from the LPI have high face validity and predictive validity. Scores on the LPI are positively related to the effectiveness of upper management, team-building skills, work-group norms, and actual levels of output (p.1).

According to the analysis of the LPI instrument, the authors maintained that scores ranking at or above the seventieth percentile are considered to be "high"; a "low" score is one at or below the thirtieth percentile; and a score that falls between these ranges is considered "moderate."

To further comprehend the scoring analysis of the LPI survey, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the individual categories. According to

the authors of the inventory, leaders who inspire are those who are able to develop a vision of a desired future, are good communicators, and develop a degree of commitment to the vision. As modelers, they understand their values, are good planners, and set good examples of organizational expectation. Challenging, according to Kouzes and Posner (1988), represented the desire to "seek out new opportunities" as well as a "willingness to change the status quo" (p.2). Challengers are risk takers. They continue to explain that Enabling was symbolized as the development of collaborative goals through the active involvement of others in the planning process. Finally, Encouraging was defined as the ability to recognize individual contributions to the organization, to establish goals, and an ability to praise contributors for their efforts.

Little Axe administrators scored themselves "high" in the all five areas with scores ranging from 27.3 in "Challenging" to 25.3 in "Inspiring" (See Appendix A). The faculty who completed the inventories, however, scored their leaders in the "moderate" category in "Challenging," "Enabling," and "Modeling" with scores of 24.4, 26.5, and 24.5. They scored them in the "high" category in the areas of "Encouraging" and "Inspiring" with scores of 27.0 and 24.7 (See Appendix A).

Research conducted by the developers of the LPI indicate that people tend to see themselves more positively than others do. The LPI norms are consistent with these general trends so scores of the LPI-Self Inventory usually tend to be somewhat higher than scores on the LPI-Other Inventory. However, since the subordinates apparently perceived their supervisors as providing less quality leadership in the areas of "Challinging," "Enabling," and "Modeling" than the administrators perceived themselves, these are areas which may require particular attention.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS WITHIN THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

As the Little Axe Effective Schools Program moved into its second year (1990-91), changes and improvements were made. In the program development component of this study, a brief description of the teacher training was discussed. This section of the study gives a more in-depth look at three programs which have evolved since the initiation of the overall program. These programs are: 1) Teacher Instructional Program (TIP), 2) After School Alternative Program (ASAP), and 3) a unique practice developed by the junior/senior high principal regarding curriculum mapping.

Teacher Instructional Program

One of the main areas of focus for the Effective Schools Program at Little Axe was the improvement of classroom instruction. After evaluating and examining a variety of teaching styles, the steering committee selected the Madeline Hunter teaching model. As indicated previously, in the summer of 1990, a contingent of teachers attended a national conference conducted by Hunter. While there, Hunter suggested that the committee contact the Arkansas State Department of Education regarding their implementation of the "Program for Effective Teaching" (P.E.T.).

The state of Arkansas had implemented the Arkansas Program for Effective Teaching in 1979, a program based on the Madeline Hunter teaching model. All teachers and administrators in Arkansas are required to participate in this program. A representative from the Arkansas State Department of Education provided the training at Little Axe for a selected groups of teachers and administrators. The six-day training period included 45 hours of classroom instruction and practice. A major portion of the P.E.T. training consists of peer-coaching where teachers are observed by the trained teachers. Positive feedback is provided to the teacher by the peer coach. The peer coaching

assignments during the 1990-91 school year are changed each nine weeks to provide as much exposure to different teaching styles as possible.

All of the Little Axe junior and senior high instructors have participated in the Teacher Instructional Program. This program was based on the guidelines indentified by the Oklahoma Department of Education as the "Minimum Criteria for Effective Training." These guidelines are also used as the teacher evaluation instrument for the Little Axe District and are divided into two main areas, practice and products.

The Little Axe Teacher Instructional Program (T.I.P.) was instituted to provide guidance and supervision that would enhance the quality of classroom instruction. This program also bridges the gap between formal evaluations for the non-tenured teachers and provides a vehicle for the tenured teachers to focus on various aspects of instruction. T.I.P. was also designed to introduce the methods and aspects of Arkansas's P.E.T. for those teachers who were unable to participate in the summer training session. All of the teachers at Little Axe are scheduled to receive the P.E.T. training during the 1991-92 school year.

At the beginning of the scool term, each teacher was provided a packet which included the "Minimum Criteria for Effective Teaching." This document also listed a variety of behaviors that a teacher would exhibit to satisfy the requirements of the "Minimum Criteria." These behaviors were discussed and explained at faculty meetings and all teachers were encouraged to monitor their classroom instruction. All non-tenured staff members were to be evaluated once each school year. As part of the formal evaluation process, each teacher was given the instructions and procedures for the T.I.P. at the formal evaluation post conference. All teachers were asked to review the "Minimum Criteria for Effective Teaching" given to them at the beginning of the year. They were

required to select three areas of instructional focus that would become the basis of their Teacher Instructional Program. The teachers were also asked to identify three areas of strength that could be used as examples of effective instruction for other faculty members. Many of the teachers found it difficult to list their areas of strength. In February, teachers were asked to submit a list of class periods when they would allow a fellow teacher to observe one of their classes. Although this activity was voluntary, all of the teachers participated.

In order to prepare the individual teachers for the peer-coaching exercise, teachers were video-taped and audited their own instructional techniques based on the "Minimum Criteria for Effective Training." This exercise was designed to increase the instructional awareness of the teacher and his or her classroom behavior and to prepare him/her for the classroom observations from their peers.

Classroom observations took place the last nine weeks of the 1990-91 school year. Prior to the actual activity, teachers were given an overview of the peer coaching techniques that emphasize positive feedback and nonjudgmental comments. Whenever possible, teachers were matched according to the areas of focus and strengths that they had previously identified. For example, a teacher who had earlier identified questioning techniques as an area of focus was matched with a teacher who had identified questioning techniques as a area of strength.

Additional aspects of P.E.T. have been introduced throughout the school term via staff development activities, lesson plan format, and professional faculty presentations at meetings. The Teacher Instructional Program will be utilized during the 1991-92 school year as a component of the P.E.T. training.

<u>After School Alternative Program (A.S.A.P.)</u>

As in most schools, the Little Axe School District has students who are unable to function in a regular classroom setting. In order to meet the

educational needs of these students, Little Axe School Designed the After School Alternative Program (A.S.A.P.).

Students, who for one reason or another, would normally be suspended from school are able to participate in the After School Alternative Program. The students are required to complete the same course work and assignments that are assigned during the regular school day. Students receive full credit for the course work if completed in a satisfactory manner.

The program operates Monday through Thursday from 3:00 pm to 7:00pm or 240 minutes each evening. Two five-minute breaks are built into the schedule so actual instruction time is 220 minutes; four forty-minute periods of core subjects and three twenty-minute periods for electives. Students are required to complete homework assignments in each subject area which count toward instructional time.

Instruction is provided by the regular teacher through audio and/or video tapes from which students are required to take notes. The notes are then submitted to the teacher for credit. Teachers are encouraged to provide enrichment assignments that reinforce the regular lesson presentation. Students are also required to complete any worksheets, quizzes, and test that are given in the regular classroom.

The program is monitored by a certified teacher and a certified teacher designated as an administrator. The teacher is required to monitor the course work while the "administrator" is available if there is a problem with a student or to communicate with the parents. Parents and students are required to sign a contract whereby they agree to follow all ASAP regulations. Parents are required to leave a telephone number where they can be reached while their child is attending ASAP.

If transportation is needed, students are allowed to ride the afternoon bus back to the campus in order to be in class by 3:00. Transportation in the evening is provided by the "administrator", however, parents will be charged mileage and the cost of the administrator's time if they use this service.

All certified junior and senior high teachers have the opportunity to participate in ASAP either as teachers or "administrators." These teachers are financially compensated for these duties. An attempt is made to have a teacher from each core area at least one day each week while the "administrator" serves all four nights per week.

The After School Alternative Program is also available for students who have exceeded the number of unexcused absences as allowed by the district's policy. Little Axe personnel hope to expand the program into a Saturday morning session from 8:00 am to noom. The Saturday program will target students who are habitually late to their first hour class or have exceeded the number of allowable absences during the previous month. The program will also be required of those students who have been suspended because of behavior. Ultimately, the After School Alternative Program was designed to meet the needs of those students who have been removed from the regular setting. This program will enable these students to continue their education and hopefully deter them from becoming dropouts.

Curriculum Mapping Project

The Junior-Senior High Principal of Little Axe School District has been a driving force behind the Effective Schools Program. In an attempt to provide effective instructional leadership, he has developed a curriculum mapping strategy to assist him and the teachers in assuring students are being taught the material for which they will be held responsible.

Personal ideas and beliefs regarding his role as an instructional leader have played an important part in the attainment of this goal. He reported that during his first year as principal, he dutifully collected teachers' lesson plans and examined them for classroom activities and homework assignments. He reported he visited classrooms to monitor teacher performance and lesson preparation. Although he had previously given himself "high marks" in the area of instructional leadership because he knew what was going on in his classrooms, he began to question the validity of this monitoring system.

The Effective Schools Program was implemented during the second year of this administrator's principalship. The Little Axe School District then had approximately 1200 students (K-12) and over 90 certified staff members. The overall goal of the district was to create a school with a climate where all children can achieve to their highest potential. In order to become instructional leaders and in accordance with the goal of the corresponding correlate, the principals were to spend "at least 50% of their time on instructional leadership." It was this goal that provided this administrator with the incentive to improve the curriculum monitoring process.

He began by asking himself some tough questions regarding the monitoring process and what was expected in the classroom. These questions included:

"What is being taught?"

"What is the relationship of today's lesson to the lesson that was taught yesterday?"

"How will this lesson tie-in to the material that was covered last week or is there a connection?"

"Does the teacher have long-range plans as required by the Minimum Criteria for Effective Teaching?"

"Will all of the required or pertinent material by covered by the end of the year?"

"How does the prepared lesson relate to the State Learner Outcomes?"

"Is the teacher aware of the grade level State Learner Outcomes?"

"Can you tell which State Learner Outcomes have been covered in class thus far?"

"Are all of the State Learner Outcomes included in comprehensive quarter and semester tests?"

"What is the grade distribution of the students tests?"

"Where is this teacher compared to other teachers teaching the same course/class?"

"How many grades are recorded weekly?"

"What is the grading system of each teacher?"

After realizing that the current curriculum monitoring system could not provide the answers to his questions, he created a multi-faceted curriculum mapping system designed to place the principal in a proactive position of instructional leadership. The system consists of five main components: 1) Course Description Worksheet, 2) Daily Lesson Plans, 3) Oklahoma State Learner Outcomes, 4) Grade Books, and 5) Major Tests. Following is a more in-depth description of each component.

The Course Description Worksheet consists of three sections: 1) Course Overview, 2) Instructional Topics, and 3) Instructional Schedule. In the Course Overview the teacher is required to describe, in two or three sentences, what the course covers. The Course Overview should also list the relationship of the course to other courses if it part of a sequence. Each teacher develops a course overview for every subject s/he teaches. In the Instructional Topics section, topics of th course are listed in the order they are presented to the students during the course. An Instructional Topic ends when there is a formal exam. The Instructional Schedule indicates the number of weeks that will be allotted to the Instructional Topics that are listed. This schedule covers nine weeks per

semester. Completion of the Course Description Worksheet establishes the long range goals for each course taught. This type of long range planning is required by the Oklahoma Minimum Criteria for Effective Teaching. It also compels a teacher to make a judgment as to the proper selection of those topics that contribute most to the success of the course. A principal can look at the Course Description Worksheet at any one time during the semester and determine the progress of the class through the scheduled course work as compared to the State Learner Outcomes. The Instructional Schedule is a teacher's prediction of what will happen over a semester or an entire year. The teacher must consult the principal if it becomes necessary to deviate from the Instructional Schedule.

The teacher's daily lesson plans are the second part of the Curriculum Mapping System. The daily lesson plans must include the following: content, anticipatory set, teacher behavior, student behavior, independent practice, and closure. This information identifies 1) how the teacher will involve the learner in the lesson, 2) how the lesson is related to past educational experiences, 3) what the teacher and the student will be doing during the lesson, and 4) how the teacher will check for understanding at the close of the lesson.

The State Learner Outcomes were developed by the Oklahoma Department of Education for each grade level for grades K-8 and for each subject area for grades 9-12. The teacher identifies which Learner Outcomes are being covered in a particular lesson. The State Learner Outcomes that are identified on the lesson plans are recorded by the principal. The curriculum mapping material is customized for each grade level and is used by teachers to monitor their own coverage of the material. The State Learner Outcomes that are tested on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Oklahoma Graduation Test are also identified for the teachers and the principals so that the necessary skills for these tests area

covered during the school year. It is important to remember that the State Learner Outcomes are a minimum coverage of the course material.

Whenever a major test is given, a teacher is to make a copy and submit it to the principal. The grade distribution for the class is to be listed on the test and will be recorded. Each question should relate to a State Learner Outcome that has been covered in class. A principal can use these copies to determine the quality and validity of the tests as to the identified learner objectives.

The teachers are to make a copy of their grade book whenever a page is completed. These copies provide the principal with valuable information regarding the number of grades recorded each week, types of homework assignments given, and daily grades. The teachers provide the principal with their grading system, including the percentage that the tests, class work and homework count toward the final grade.

The Curriculum Mapping System attempts to answer all of the questions previously puzzling the administrator. The system can become an invaluable tool for principals who want to monitor the academic progress of their teachers. All of the components of the curriculum mapping system must be kept current in order for the information to be relevant for the principal. Informal classroom visits and formal evaluations should still be considered an important job for the principal. It will still take a lot of time and effort on the part of the principal to become a success as an instructional leader; the curriculum mapping system will provide the information that will definitely contribute to that success.

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CONCLUSION

Although findings on Effective Schools research varies from school to school and researcher to researcher, the Little Axe Effective Schools Program apparently is succeeding. One of the key elements of this success lies in the commitment of the administration and staff to the program. Although three of the teachers felt their administrator was not an instructional leader, they felt their own commitment to the program would show measurable success. The remaining staff members and all of the administrators felt they were successfully achieving their set committee and classroom goals. However, the overall goal of every student achieving to their highest potential remained ever present in their minds.

The positive feedback provided through the interviews and teacher evaluations of the program cannot go unaddressed. Staff members were excited about the program and the professionalism it had brought to their lives. Comments such as "I feel more professional" and "They (the administrators) are really listening to us." were reiterated by several staff members.

Personnel from the Little Axe School District have refused to settle for mediocrity. They realized that reform efforts in their school start with each of them. The responsibility for reform lies with all educators, including teachers, administrators, board members, and parents. Only when efforts are refocused from "finding someone to blame" to collaborative working relationships for the sake of the students will Effective Schools truly exist.

Staff and administrators alike all stressed the overall belief of the Little Axe School District that "all children can learn." They realize that the future, and how to prepare for it, is the issue for student success. The more educated students are, the more choices they will have. The Little Axe School

District has taken a proactive stance regarding school reform. Instructional leadership, teacher improvement, and student success have become their district wide goals. Each of them is contributing to school effectiveness by helping to create a positive school climate where all students can, and are expected to, learn.

Longititudinal quantifiable analyses of the program will be conducted when several achievement tests have been tabulated. Once these results have been aggregated, additional direction will be provided regarding the strengths and areas of improvement of the overall program. If the Little Axe School District is truly determined to increase student achievement, enhance teaching techniques, and provide instructional leadership it will take an ongoing program to do so. This cannot be a program that once a level of success is reached, the initiative and drive of its staff and administration can diminish. The attention to curriculum and instruction, the consistency of strong instructional leadership, the emphasis on high student expectation, and continued student evaluation must be sustained in order for the Effective School Program to succeed in any district.

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